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"We stipulate to employers that they do have records. Most have been for assaults on other gang members. We don't send employers narcotics addicts or pickpockets," explained Hollopeter.

Another thing preventing these youth from getting jobs is their general naiveté about the working world. For this reason, the prospective employees are put through the 12-hour World of Work course developed by BCA and conducted by two members of the police department.

Hollopeter described these youth, who are typical of Boys' Club members: "Most of the kids have never had a real job before. They don't know what's expected of them. Some don't even know what a job is – just that adults are supposed to have one. We tell a participant that the reason the employer is hiring him is that he has a job to do he can't do himself."

The work orientation program is actually a five-faceted one including recruitment, counseling, placement, individualized follow-up and supportive services and referral. (These areas are explored fully in *Building Employment Skills Today in a Boys' Club*, available with the *World of Work Curriculum Guide* for $0.75 postage and handling from Stanley E. Walker, BCA's Official Supplier of Goods, 1716 E. Second Street, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076.)

In describing the program, which is an outgrowth of a conversation he had with the chief of police, Hollopeter said: "It started out not so much as a program to get them jobs, but a program to get the kids off the street. We're not in the employment business. But if these kids had continued as they were, all probably would have been arrested for something serious eventually."

40 Percent Working

"We estimate that there are about 500 gang members of employable age in our community. We have placed over 40 percent of them. And we want to place more because when boys are working they seem to keep out of trouble," he added.

Hollopeter feels that keeping gang leaders working and off the streets has resulted in a decrease in violent crimes committed by youths.

"The majority of arrests used to be for stabbings and gang fights. Now, they're for status offenses such as possession of alcohol," he observed.

Partly because of their contact with each other during World of Work orientation, police and gang members have developed new attitudes toward each other. Hollopeter said:

"Very few of the kids are mad at the Police Department. There are fewer assaults on the police. The kids, by and large, understand they deserve to be busted when they are. They no longer consider the police the enemy.

"And the police, generally, have assumed an attitude of wanting to help the kids. It's prevention and that's relatively new in law enforcement."

Confident of how a program such as the one at the Boys' Club of San Gabriel Valley can prevent juvenile delinquency in a community, Hollopeter said: "If we work hard enough, we can stop gang violence here. I know we can."

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